



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO ARCHBISHOP GIUSEPPE MOLINARI OF L'AQUILA
READ AT THE BEGINNING OF THE FUNERAL MASS
FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE EARTHQUAKE**

*To dear Archbishop Giuseppe Molinari and to all of you,
dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,*

In these dramatic hours in which a terrible tragedy has struck this region, I feel spiritually present in your midst to share in your anguish, imploring from God eternal repose for the victims, a speedy recovery for the wounded and for all the courage to continue to hope without succumbing to despair. I asked my Secretary of State to come and preside at this extraordinary liturgical celebration in which the Christian community will gather closely around their deceased to bid them a final farewell. I entrust to him, and to my Private Secretary, the task of bringing you in person the expression of my heartfelt participation in the grief of all who are mourning their loved ones, overwhelmed by the disaster.

In moments such as these, faith continues to be a source of light and hope, which precisely in these days speaks to us of the suffering of the Son of God, made man for us. May his Passion, death, and Resurrection be a source of comfort for all and open the heart of each one to the contemplation of that life in which "death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away" (Rv 21: 4).

I am sure that with everyone's efforts it will be possible to meet the most pressing needs. The violence of the earthquake has created singularly difficult situations. I have followed the developments of the devastating seismic phenomenon since the first shock of the earthquake, which was also felt in the Vatican, and I have been pleased to note the manifestation of a growing wave of solidarity, thanks to which the first rescue operations were organized, with a view to increasingly effective action by both State and Church institutions, as well as by private individuals.

The Holy See intends to do its part, together with the parishes, religious institutes and lay associations. This is the moment for commitment, in harmony with the State bodies that are already doing praiseworthy work. It is only by solidarity that such sorrowful trials can be overcome.

I entrust the people and families involved in this tragedy to the Blessed Virgin and, through her motherly intercession I ask the Lord to dry every tear and alleviate every wound, as I impart to each one a special, comforting Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 9 April 2009

BENEDICT PP. XVI

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